

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application.

Claims 1 and 3-8 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider his rejection in view of the amendments and remarks set forth below.

Claim for Priority

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner has recognized Applicant's claim for foreign priority. In view of the fact that the Applicant's claim has been perfected, no additional action is required from Applicant at this time.

Drawings

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner has accepted the formal drawings for examination purposes. It is respectfully submitted that the formal drawings comply with the requirements in the U.S.P.T.O. If the Official Draftsman has any objections to the formal drawings, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned as soon as possible so that an appropriate action may be taken. Further, it is noted that the Examiner has required the legend "Prior Art" to be added to Figure 4. The change has now

been submitted by way of a separate letter requesting an approval of drawing changes.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Examiner has acknowledged the Information Disclosure Statement filed on August 17, 2001. An initialed copy of the PTO-1449 has been received from the Examiner. No further action is necessary at this time.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over the European patent (EP 943464) in view of Tsuda (U.S. patent 4,962,801). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Applicant submits that the amended claims are not obvious over this combination of the references.

The Examiner states that the European patent discloses the claimed tire except for the inclination angles of the first to fourth grooves being different. The Examiner states that it would have been obvious to incline the first to fourth auxiliary slant grooves in the outside of the asymmetrical tread pattern at different angles as claimed, since the Tsuda reference discloses the asymmetric tread pattern and suggests using different inclination

angles for the auxiliary slant grooves so as to improve cornering stability and noise reduction. Applicant submits that this combination of the references does not teach the claims as presently amended.

Claim 1 includes a combination of elements of the pneumatic tire, including a tread portion provided with block pattern asymmetric about the tire equator, having an inside tread edge and an outside tread edge, outside lateral grooves, inside lateral grooves, outside blocks divided by outside connecting grooves having center lines with inclination angles being in the range of 20 to 50 degrees and the portions adjacent inside lateral grooves being divided into inside blocks by inside connecting grooves having a center line inclined at an angle of more than 0 degrees. Applicant submits that the references do not show each of these features and that the features are not obvious thereover.

In particular, the references do not show the features which have been added in claim 1, such as the inclination angles having the specific size relationships which were previously described in claim 2. Also, the claims do not show the additional paragraph added at the end of claim 1 describing the inside connecting groove having a center line inclined an angle of more than 0 degrees with respect to the circumferential direction. Further, Applicant

submits that these features are not obvious over the combination of references cited by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant submits the claim 1 is now allowable.

Claims 3-7 depend from claim 1 and are also considered to be allowable. In addition, each of these claims further describes various inclination angles and their sizes. These features are also not seen in the reference. Accordingly, these claims are believed to be allowable.

Claim 8 has also been added, which includes the limitations of claim 1 but recited as a combination of left and right tire each having the features recited in claim 1. Thus, claim 8 is considered to be allowable for the same reasons for cited above regarding claim 1.

Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims clearly distinguish over the patents relied by the Examiner, either alone or in combination. In view of this, reconsideration of rejections and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested.

Should there be any outstanding matters which need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully

requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number of the undersigned below to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant respectfully petitions for a two (2) month extension of time for filing a reply in connection with the present application, and the required fee of \$400.00 is attached hereto.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the application by this Amendment.

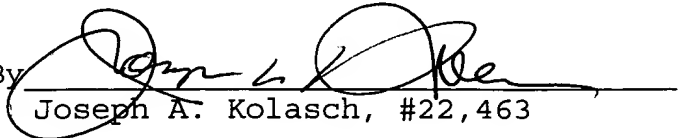
Appl. No. 09/741,046
Response filed on November 4, 2002

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.


Respectfully submitted,

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By


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Attachment: Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

(Rev. 11/28/01)

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Claims:

Claim 2 has been canceled.

The claims have been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A pneumatic tire comprising
a tread portion provided with a block pattern being asymmetric about the tire equator, said tread portion having an inside tread edge and an outside tread edge to be placed on the inside and outside of a vehicle, respectively,
outside lateral grooves extending from the outside tread edge to a tread center region beyond the tire equator, each said outside lateral groove having a groove center line X0 inclined towards one direction with respect to the tire circumferential direction at an angle θ_0 of from 40 to 60 degrees with respect to the tire circumferential direction,
inside lateral grooves extending from the inside tread edge to the tread center region, each said inside lateral groove having a groove center line X5 inclined at an angle θ_5 of from 70 to 100 degrees with respect to the tire circumferential direction,
each portion between the circumferentially adjacent outside lateral grooves divided into outside blocks by outside connecting grooves extending thereacross, said outside connecting grooves comprising a first groove, a second groove, a third groove and a fourth groove arranged in this order from the outside tread edge toward the inside tread edge,

the first outside connecting groove having a first groove center line X1, the second outside connecting groove having a second groove center line X2, the third outside connecting groove having a third groove center line X3, the fourth outside connecting groove having a fourth groove center line X4, the first to fourth groove center lines X1 to X4 inclined reversely to the groove center lines X0 of the outside lateral grooves with respect to the tire circumferential direction, wherein the inclination angles θ_1 , θ_2 , θ_3 and [to] θ_4 of the first, second, third and [to] fourth groove center lines X1, X2, X3 and [to] X4, respectively, with respect to the tire circumferential direction are [being] in a range of from 20 to 50 degrees and [being] different from each other, and the inclination angles satisfy the following condition:
 $\theta_1 > \theta_2 > \theta_3 > \theta_4$,

each portion between the circumferentially adjacent inside lateral grooves is divided into inside blocks by at least one inside connecting groove extending thereacross, said at least one inside connecting groove having a groove center line X6 inclined at an angle θ_6 of more than 0 degrees with respect to the tire circumferential direction towards the same direction as the outside lateral grooves.

3. (Amended) The pneumatic tire according to claim 1 [2], wherein angle differences $\theta_1 - \theta_2$, $\theta_2 - \theta_3$ and $\theta_3 - \theta_4$ are not less than 5 degrees.

Claims 4-8 have been added.